

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended.

As a preliminary matter, regarding the refusal to consider document 4 in the Information Disclosure Statement filed October 4, 2006, Applicant notes that a copy of the International Search Report, citing document 4, has been provided to the Office. To further assist the Examiner, an English translation of the International Preliminary Report on Patentability ("IPRP") is being submitted herewith.

Applicant respectfully requests that document 4 be considered, at least to the extent that its relevance is indicated in the International Search Report and the IPRP.

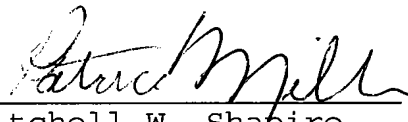
Turning to the claims, the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 4, 5, 7, and 12-18 is acknowledged, with appreciation. Claims 4, 5, 7, and 12 have been rewritten in independent form to include their respective base and intervening claims. These claims also include amendments for clarity which do not affect patentability. Claims 8 and 9 have been amended to revise their dependencies, and Claims 13-15 and 17 have been editorially revised.

Accordingly, the pending claims, Claims 4, 5, 7-10, and 12-18, are in condition for allowance, and this application should be passed to issue.

A Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 50-1165 (XA-10534) any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 that may be required by this paper and to credit any overpayment to that Account. If any extension of time is required in connection with the filing of this paper and has not been separately requested, such extension is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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December 26, 2007